

Nehemiah Organizes the Community (September 22–25, 444 BC)

Nehemiah 7:1–5a

Organization for Conservation

1 Now when the wall was rebuilt and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers and the singers and the Levites were appointed,

2 then I put Hanani my brother, and Hananiah the commander of the fortress, in charge of Jerusalem, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.

3 Then I said to them, “Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot, and while they are standing *guard*, let them shut and bolt the doors. Also appoint guards from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, each at his post, and each in front of his own house.”

The Registration of the People

4 Now the city was large and spacious, but the people in it were few and the houses were not built.

5a Then my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles, the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogies.

Ezra Reads the Law and Explains It to the People (September 26, 444 BC)

Nehemiah 7:73b–8:12

7:73b And when the seventh month came, the sons of Israel *were* in their cities.

8:1 And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel.

2 Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who *could* listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.

3 He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

4 Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand; and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah *and* Meshullam on his left hand.

5 Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

6 Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people *remained* in their place.

8 They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.

9 Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said to them, “Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

11 So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.”

12 All the people went away to eat, to drink, to send portions and to celebrate a great festival, because they understood the words which had been made known to them.

Discovery of the Forgotten Feast (September 27, 444 BC)

Nehemiah 8:13–15

13 Then on the second day the heads of fathers' *households* of all the people, the priests and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law.
 14 They found written in the law how the LORD had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month.
 15 So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of *other* leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written."

Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles (October 11–17, 444 BC)

Nehemiah 8:16–18

16 So the people went out and brought *them* and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim.
 17 The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing.
 18 He read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day *there was* a solemn assembly according to the ordinance.

Praise the Name of the LORD (c. 444 BC)

Psalms 148

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
Praise Him in the heights!
- 2 Praise Him, all His angels;
Praise Him, all His hosts!
- 3 Praise Him, sun and moon;
Praise Him, all stars of light!
- 4 Praise Him, highest heavens,
And the waters that are above the heavens!
- 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For He commanded and they were created.
- 6 He has also established them forever and ever;
He has made a decree which will not pass away.
- 7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
Sea monsters and all deeps;
- 8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds;
Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;
- 9 Mountains and all hills;
Fruit trees and all cedars;
- 10 Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and winged fowl;
- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth;
- 12 Both young men and virgins;

Old men and children.

- 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For His name alone is exalted;
His glory is above earth and heaven.
- 14 And He has lifted up a horn for His people,
Praise for all His godly ones;
Even for the sons of Israel, a people near to Him.
Praise the LORD!

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